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ABSTRACT

Early childhood professional organizations in Canada and the United States have evolved since leaders of the Kindergarten Department of the National Educational Association (NEA) met in Toronto in 1891. This meeting led to the creation of the International Kindergarten Union (IKU), now known as the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI). From the ACEI developed the National Association for Nursery Education, a precursor to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). In 1892, the organizational goals of the IKU were presented to: (1) gather and disseminate knowledge of the kindergarten movement throughout the world; (2) bring into active cooperation all kindergarten interests; (3) promote the establishment of kindergartens, and (4) elevate the standard of professional training for the kindergartner. Leading the organization were three married professional couples: Eudora and William N. Hailmann, Maria Kraus-Boelte and John Kraus, and Adaline and John Hughes. Their involvement created a female-based department in the practically all male NEA, and they promoted the Froebelian theory of early childhood education. (Includes 19 references.) (LBT)

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TORONTO'S FIRST U.S. – CANADIAN ECE CONFERENCE 1891

National Association for the Education of Young Children

History Seminar Presentation
Toronto, Canada

November 20, 1998

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Toronto's First U.S.- Canadian ECE Conference - 1891

Our 1998 NAEYC conference in Toronto is actually the third time that North American early childhood educators have met here. The second was in 1933, when the Committee on Nursery Schools had just become the National Association for Nursery Education. The most exciting event of that conference at the beginning of the Great Depression was unscheduled. The federal government had just announced funding for preschools and a hastily designated committee of NANE members, working through most of the first night, developed guidelines for what became known as the WPA nursery schools.[1] It was an interesting coincidence that the opening speaker dealt with the values demonstrated by early education and felt that the public schools were not yet ready to enroll children under the age of six or seven. Within a few months, most public schools districts were administering WPA nursery schools and their teachers were joining NANE.

However, the very first Toronto meeting of American early childhood educators had been forty years earlier, in 1891, as the Kindergarten Department of the National Educational Association (NEA).[2] The NEA general session opened on the afternoon of July 14 with the singing of the national anthems of Canada and the United States. "Fortunately," said James Hughes, Chairman of the Executive Committee, "They are sung to the same tune, and we will sing the first verses of God Save the Queeen and America." He then introduced the official government representative by saying that Sir John Macdonald, the originally confirmed speaker, had been "laid to rest" a few weeks earlier. The next to be invited had been the Honorable Mr. Foster, Minister of Finance, but at the last minute, he went to Ottowa for budget discussions. Hughes ended up with the Reverend Principal Grant, of Queen's College, Kingston, who gave a rambling speech with such profundities as "It is my duty to tell you that Canada is a very big country."[3]

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[1] D.W. Hewes (1996). *NAEYC's First Half Century, 1926-1976*. Washington, D.C.: NAEYC. pp 6-8 and ERIC EJ 148 709.

[2] The National Educational Association dropped the "al" ending in 1908 to incorporate as the National Education Association.

[3] *Addresses and Proceedings of the National Educational Association* (NEA) - 1891.

After this inauspicious start, the four day conference alternated between what we now call "keynote" presentations, business meetings, and departmental sessions. Papers presented in the Kindergarten Department's meetings dealt with such issues as whether children should be "prepared for the rigors of schooling" through teaching them obedience and conformity or whether parents and teachers should continue to work together to develop their innate potentials. One speaker emphasized that "The child compares, generalizes, reasons, on his own plane of development, and delights in it. We may confuse, discourage, and make him dishonest by requiring him to go through forms of thinking beyond his power of comprehension."

American Kindergartens and Their Associations

While it would be interesting to analyze the topics covered in this meeting held more than a century ago, my focus is upon the Kindergarten Department leaders and the creation of the International Kindergarten Union (IKU), now the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI). Their organizational "aims" were neatly listed in an official report to the NEA after their 1892 joint meeting in Saratoga Springs: 1) To gather and disseminate knowledge of the kindergarten movement throughout the world, 2) To bring into active coöperation all kindergarten interests, 3) To promote the establishment of kindergartens, and 4) To elevate the standard of professional training for the kindergartner. Annual dues and "various other matters" were to be determined later.[4] Why did members of that 1891 Kindergarten Department committe, while planning their participation in 1893 Columbian Exposition at Chicago, decide to once again have an association outside the NEA Kindergarten Department?

First, to understand the integration of kindergartens into the NEA, it is helpful to quickly review the history of the Froebelian kindergarten movement. A brief introduction is necessary to set the scene. Friedrich Froebel, after becoming discouraged with the incapacities he saw in students entering his Prussian boarding school in the early 1800s, opened the first kindergarten for two- to seven-year-old children in 1836. He

[4] A. Laws, Secretary pro tem, "Report of Committee on Organization of Kindergarten Work, Saratoga Springs, July 15, 1892" in NEA, 1892, pp 256-57. Note that "kindergartner" meant "teacher."

intended it to be the opening wedge in a humanistic global revolution that would affect both sexes, all socio-economic levels, and all ages, by means of an educational system that incorporated freedom, self-activity, self-responsibility, stimulating environments, developmentally appropriate knowledge, and creativity. During the next twenty years, in part because he tried the radical experiment of training young women as teachers and involved women in the implementation of his idea, the kindergartens had spread throughout Europe.

We must remember that kindergartens were originally for children aged about two or three until six or seven. In 1870, there were less than a dozen in the United States, all but one taught in German. Ten years later, there were about 400 in 30 states. After a decade of rapid growth, spurred in large part by concerns about the large numbers of uneducated and impoverished immigrants entering the country, there were about four thousand by 1891. Kindergartens had gone through a sequence of sponsorships during this period. The first were informal self-supported private kindergartens. Soon, charity schools in low income communities were sponsored by women's associations and as denominational outreach programs. By the 1880s, a few public schools provided kindergarten rooms but associations and parent fees continued to pay their expenses.

During this period, beginning with the original local and regional associations of Froebelian kindergarten advocates, several organizations had evolved. The American Froebel Union, established by Elizabeth Peabody in 1878, was more of an advocacy group than an association for professionally trained persons. Ross captured its almost cult-like essence in The Kindergarten Crusade.[5] Other groups, including the Friends of Froebel and the Western Kindergarten Association, joined the Froebel Union to become the National Froebel Institute at an 1882 meeting jointly held with the NEA. Two years later, in 1884, that name was changed to the Froebel Institute of North America to include Canadians. The Institute leaders then led the campaign to get the Kindergarten Department established within National Education Association by vote of the membership in 1884.

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[5] E.D. Ross (1976). *The Kindergarten Crusade: The Establishment of Preschool Education in the United States*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Nina Vandewalker summarized the early years of the Kindergarten Department, as it "was forced to work its way in the midst of great discouragements, outside as well as inside the educational profession. It was brought, like all reform movements, face to face with prejudice, skepticism, ignorance, and ridicule. It held its own, however, from year to year, presented an annual program to its members, gaining here a little more respect, there a trifle more encouragement and vantage ground. One by one progressive educators paused in passing by the kindergarten door to hear what was being said inside."[6] By 1891, the kindergartners were recognized as having "the live department" of the NEA conference.[7]

To return to the question of why members of that 1891 Kindergarten Department committe made plans for an association outside the NEA, one explanation has been their desire to leave an association that was controlled by male school principals and superintendents. This was transmitted primarily as an oral tradition, told to me in the 1960s and 1970s by women who had been ACEI members since its very early years.[8] There is some justification for this reasoning. When the 1891 NEA Board of Directors met in Toronto, only six women were listed in its total membership of seventy-one. To appreciate that even this token representation meant progress, we must recognize that when the National Teachers Association (NTA) was organized in 1857, female teachers were allowed to attend but not to become members or to speak. For example, there is a story about Susan B. Anthony, attired in Quaker grey, standing quietly for half an hour until the flustered officers finally permitted her to make a statement. However, male domination did not apply to the Kindergarten Department. When the NTA reorganized to become the National Educational Association in 1872, it was Froebelian kindergarten supporters who were influential in changing its membership terminology from *gentlemen* to *persons*. Virtually all kindergarten and elementary school teachers were women, so this opened the door to their involvement - including voting privileges.

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6 N. Vandewalker (1908). *The Kindergarten*. p 133. See References.

7 Wesley, E. B. (1957). *NEA: The First Hundred Years*. See References.

8 One who was positive about this viewpoint was Anna Louis Jenkins, aged 92 when I visited her in Pasadena in 1972. She had been involved with ACEI archival projects.

I believe that there was another reason, but it will be presented later. First, we must deal with the accusation of male leadership which was not supportive of the Froebelian kindergartens.

Dual-Career Marriages of NEA Leaders

Although the NEA had earlier been an all-male organization, it is my belief that the charter members of the International Kindergarten Union did not form their all-female group just because they felt discriminated against in 1891. To support this hypothesis, it is necessary to look briefly at the "cast of characters" involved in this drama. Unlike conventional marriages during the last half of the nineteenth century, the kindergarten department leadership had three couples with long-lasting egalitarian marriages which were actually part of their Froebelian philosophical stance. According to some theorists, an egalitarian marriage means nearly identical careers in which the work of each spouse is equally valued. An alternate concept applies even though there are differences in earning power, occupation, and educational attainment.[9] An equality between spouses transcends the realities of the workplace. In the 1890s, few women were able to attain administrative positions and anyone working with young children was viewed as somehow lower in status than those who work with older children or adults. (We will avoid any "The more things change the more they are the same" discussion!) None of these wives who took leadership roles in the Kindergarten Department did anything dramatic, such as wearing bloomers in public or going on hunger strikes. Instead, they and the teachers who trained with them endorsed the wearing of sensible skirts short enough to almost show their ankles at a time when other women wore ruffles sweeping the ground. They viewed the kindergartens as child care centers that enabled older girls to attend school instead of staying home to care for younger siblings. As followers of Froebel, they advocated a non-sexist educational method that introduced young children to the idea of equal intellectual accomplishments for boys and girls. And, more than a century ago, they provided a model for hundreds of younger educators, allowing them to

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[9] Scanzoni, J. (1979). "Social Processes and Power in Families" in *Contemporary Theories about the Family*, edited by W.R. Burr and others. NY: Free Press, 295-316.

observe that dual career marriages can work if both partners are capable of mutual respect and understanding.

These three couples did not consciously set out to be different. There is no indication that they tried to be models of dual career marriages. They simply did what to them seemed right. Their own upbringing, the Froebelian theory which dominated their personal philosophies, and the complex social milieu of the late nineteenth century were factors enabling them to maintain long and happy relationships which countered many of the established sex-related roles characteristic of the period. Through introduction and promotion of the kindergartens, they attempted to reform all American educational systems to incorporate student self-government, a sequenced curriculum of active learning experiences, and the support of businesses and community structures. Froebel's method, which they sometimes called "The New Education," depended upon adults who were facilitators rather than authoritarians, able to promote children's advancement socially, physically, and aesthetically in a supportive environment. These three couples with egalitarian marriages were:

William N. Hailmann (1836-1920) & Eudora Hailmann (1835-1904)

Maria Kraus-Boelté (1836-1918) & John Kraus (1815-1896)

John Hughes (1845-1935) & Adaline (Ada) Moreau Hughes (1847-1929)

The rise and fall of the Froebelian kindergarten parallels the lifespan careers of these six individuals whose married lives were inextricably associated with the NEA Kindergarten Department. Brief biographical sketches will indicate their unique contributions.[10]

<u>William and Eudora Hailmann</u>

The egalitarian marriage with the earliest linkage to the NEA and the Kindergarten Department is that of William and Eudora Hailmann. William Nicholas Hailmann was an only child, born to upper-middle-class German-speaking Swiss parents in 1836 and educated in Pestalozzian schools. He received his science degree from the Zurich Cantonal College. Soon after he emigrated to Louisville, in 1852, he began teaching modern languages, first in a Female Academy and then in

[10] See References for additional readings about these six Froebelian leaders.

a new Girls High School. In both, he developed Pestalozzian-style laboratories to teach basic scientific principles through manipulation. He attended almost every meeting of the NTA/NEA from the first one in 1857 until the one in 1915 when he was called to the platform and given an ovation by the membership.

Eudora Grover came from an old Southern family with liberal ideals. Her paternal grandmother had manumitted the family slaves and persuaded her only son to move away from the south and to send his four daughters to the private girls school where Eudora was particularly interested in music and art. After William Hailmann and Eudora were married on Christmas Eve, 1857, they established their home in the rapidly growing Louisville.

When William Hailmann returned to Zurich in 1860 to visit his parents and to study school methods, he discovered the Froebelian system that dominated the rest of his life. Following army service during the Civil War, he was hired to develop Pestalozzi-Froebel methods in Louisville's new German-American school. It opened in the fall of 1865 with the first specifically designed kindergarten in America and a German-trained Froebelian teacher.

As was the custom in Froebelian kindergartens, Eudora assisted in the classrooms of their four children. She became so interested that in 1866 she went to Zurich by herself for three months to observe Froebelian methods, leaving the children at home with William. In 1871, she went back for a year to attend special training classes. William's autobiographical notes state that on these trips she "gleaned a rich harvest which enabled her to become a progressive leader in the field." In 1873, the Hailmanns began a series of upward moves, first to Milwaukee, and then to Detroit. William was principal of German-American academies and later an administrator in public high schools. Eudora opened kindergartens with teacher training programs. In 1883, William accepted a position as Superintendent of Schools in LaPorte, Indiana, with understanding that he could develop an experimental Froebelian program from early childhood to adulthood. In addition to setting up kindergarten teacher training as part of the public schools in LaPorte, Eudora became the director of a normal school in Winona, Minnesota.

My 1990 History Seminar paper dealt with controversies about kindergarten exhibits at the 1890 NEA convention in St. Paul.[11] These exhibits had become a regular feature of the conventions since 1884, when Eudora's article in The New Education had pointed out that it was "the right and duty of women to participate equally with men in the administration of educational interest." As president of the Kindergarten Department in 1891, she coordinated extensive Froebelian exhibits that held a "foremost place in the building" and "visitors thronged" the area. From "the first efforts of baby fingers" up to advanced work of older children, Newcombe described it as "marking an epoch in the history of all exhibits" and "conspicuous in intricate designs of practical value and utility." The demonstration work of teachers, described as "a model of accuracy and originality," brought out possibilities of different materials in most beautiful forms and coloring.[12]

While William pushed for incorporation of Froebelian philosophy in upper grades and wrote books from his position as an administrator, Eudora dedicated herself to the training of kindergarten teachers, innovations in methods and materials, and the establishment of schools and their supporting community groups. In addition, the couple were popular speakers on the summer Chautauqua circuit, where they were accompanied by their four children. Their work merged so that it was often impossible to ascertain whether ideas were hers or his. For example, from 1877 until the financial depression of 1893, they co-edited *The New Education* and many instructional brochures. They spearheaded a legislative campaign, successful in 1887, permitting tax-supported kindergartens in Indiana's public schools - the first state to take that step. Together they led efforts to organize the kindergarten supporters as the Friends of Froebel and then arranged to hold the 1882 meeting of the National Froebel Institute jointly with the NEA. They were instrumental in forming the Kindergarten Department within the NEA, with William Hailmann president from 1884 until Eudora was elected to that office in 1889.

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[11] D. W. Hewes (1990). "Early Childhood Exhibit Controversies, 1890 and 1990." ERIC/EECE ED 330 431 PS 01476.

[12] L. T. Newcombe. "Report on Kindergarten Exhibits" in NEA, 1891. Work of this period is illustrated in N. Brosterman (1997). *Inventing Kindergarten*. NY: Abrams.

Ada and James Hughes

Ada (Adaline) Mareau and James Hughes were Toronto's own dual-career Froebelian couple in NEA. James Hughes, the Chairman of the Executive Committee for the 1891 meeting, had been born and educated in Toronto. As the superintendent of schools in that city from 1880 to 1920, he was a dynamic leader, trying to instill humanistic education, gymnasiums for both boys and girls, and equal college access for women. He became interested in the kindergarten in the early 1880s through his contacts with Krause, Hailmann, and others at the NEA meetings in the United States. Preparatory to opening Toronto's public school kindergartens, the first to be an integral part of a Canadian tax-supported educational system and the second in all of North America, he visited similar programs in St. Louis, Boston and New York. After meeting Ada Mareau at the 1882 NEA meeting, he hired her as the Toronto Kindergarten Supervisor.[13]

Ada, born in New York and educated at the State Normal School in Albany, was one of the first graduates of the New York Seminary for Kindergartners. She taught briefly in Nova Scotia before going to Toronto. By 1884, John and Ada had married and were involved together in the establishment of the NEA Kindergarten Department.

In 1885, the entire province of Ontario adopted the public school kindergarten concept. Their biographer wrote that "James L. and Ada Hughes were ardent advocates of Froebelianism and were almost wholly responsible for establishing kindergartens as part of the public school system of Ontario. ... By 1900, there were 166 kindergartens in Ontario, with more than 11,000 children enrolled."[14] Ada Hughes is an example of the duplicate allegiances in the NEA and the IKU. In 1891, when she was elected Chairman of the Kindergarten Department and her presentation was entitled "Kindergarten Methods in Intellectual Training," it was typical of her pragmatic approach. She emphasized the

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[13] The maiden name of Adaline Hughes has had various spellings, sometimes Marean or Marian. Barnard's (1890) *Kindergarten* included a letter from James Hughes stating that "Miss Ada Mareau" had been employed to be in charge of Toronto kindergartens. p 624. The report Hughes wrote for the Ontario Minister of Education in 1883 is also in Barnard's compilation, pp 617-624. See References.

[14] Johnson, F.H. (1968). *A Brief History of Canadian Education.* Toronto: McGraw-Hill of Canada. See also L.M. and V. G. Logan (1974), *Educating Young Children.* Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

necessity of proving to skeptics that kindergarten training had economic value, but her description of children's learning was Froebelian. "The starting point, the process, and the result are seen as a related whole, and the child has the thrill of a creator's delight as the finished work lies before him." (Her paper sounds like HighScope's Plan–Do–Review.) At the same time, she was involved with the establishment of the International Kindergarten Union.

Maria Kraus-Boelté and John Kraus

Although illness prevented John Kraus and Maria Kraus-Boelté from attending the 1891 sessions in Toronto, William Hailmann read a letter from them at the department's opening ceremony and their influence permeated the Kindergarten meeting. John Kraus, born in Germany, had been a friend of Froebel and was already recognized as an outstanding educator when he emigrated to Texas after the unsuccessful 1848 revolution in Germany. In 1867, on the basis of several articles that he had written for American publications, Krause was invited by Commissioner Henry Barnard to join the new United States Bureau of Education His proposal for public kindergartens in Washington, D.C. was republished in Cornelia, an international magazine. According to Barnard, "Out of that article in the 'Cornelia' sprang a correspondence in which the hearts as well as the heads of two persons became so deeply interested, that the upshot of the whole matter was the establishment, in the city of New York, in 1873, of the Normal Training Kindergarten and its associated model classes. In the development of this veritable Froebelian institute, Prof. Kraus and Mrs. Kraus-Bolte have worked in full accord, against difficulties and hindrances which would have appalled spirits less determined."[15]

That correspondence was with Maria Boelté, twenty-one years younger than Kraus. She had been born into a large wealthy family in Germany, where her education was primarily by private tutors. She studied (against the wishes of her parents) with Froebel's widow in Hamburg. As a volunteer in the London kindergarten of German

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15 M. Krause-Boelte, "Reminiscences in Kindergarten Work" in Barnard, *Kindergarten*, pp 537- 550. Quote p 550. See References.

expatriots, Berthe and Johannes Ronge, she was influenced by their ideas of free thought and active leadership roles for women.

Maria Boelté entered into the correspondence with John Kraus after she had returned to Germany and opened a successful kindergarten and teacher training program there. In 1872, she took a private school position that had been arranged for her in New York City. At the time of their marriage the following year, John Kraus resigned his position in Washington and together they founded the New York Seminary for Kindergartners. In an 1874 letter which was published in Peabody's Kindergarten Messenger and in his 1877 address to the NEA, John Krause emphasized that both men and women should work with young children, having equal rights and responsibilities. Together they wrote the authoritative Kindergarten Guide in 1877 and they spoke out forcefully to promote what they believed was the the Froebelian system.

Barnard wrote about the beneficial influence of the female and male congeniality and co-operation shown by these operators of the New York Normal Kindergarten, but one gets the impression that this was rather an odd couple. The official NEA obituary, in 1896, described John Kraus as "a man of genial simplicity of manner and full of enthusiasm" and said that he "was worthy of note both in what he was himself and what he has had the fortune to represent - the introduction of kindergarten methods and principles to America."[16] In contrast, Maria Kraus-Boelté was somewhat regal and very much in charge of the day-to-day operations of their school.[17]

Of these three couples, it is interesting to note that John Krause voluntarily assumed a subordinate position in the New York Seminary for Kindergartners, tending to the business aspects while his wife was clearly the person in charge. While Eudora Hailmann and Ada Hughes never reached administrative positions equal to those of their husbands, they held professional status and earned part of the family income. Ada was employed by the school district administered by her husband. Eudora was paid through local community programs for charity kindergartens or left town with her husband's blessing. For example, when she went to

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[16] H. S. Tarbell, H. S. (1896). "In memoriam: John Kraus." *NEA*. pp. 229-30.

[17] See Barnard (1890). *Kindergarten*. pp 551-558. See References.

Florence, Massachusetts in 1879 as consultant to a new employer-supported kindergarten that "enrolled children of all colors and social positions," she soon became involved in a projected plan for converting the local elementary school system to Froebelian philosophy. An affectionate but businesslike letter written by William at this time indicates their shared interest in schools as a social agencies integrated into the community.[18]

In the printed addresses and comments of the annual NEA conferences, it is possible to trace the attendance, accomplishments and the concerns of these three couples. Most notable was the power that was attained by the three wives. Despite their eligibility for NEA membership, only a few women had held elective positions in the organization – most often as department secretaries. Eudora Hailmann, as the first woman president of an NEA department, became an 1890/91 member of the NEA Board of Directors. Ada Hughes followed her in that position and in 1899 Maria Kraus-Boelté was elected president. Although these six individuals often spoke about kindergartens, their overall approach was humanitarian rather than orthodox Froebelian. For example, in a discussion on the "School of the Future," James Hughes emphasized the need to provide for the "essential individuality of manhood or womanhood of each child."[19] Eudora and William Hailmann reflected this when they joined the heated defense of the 1892 NEA paper in which James Hughes criticized the Herbartian approach to education.[20] We might assume that there was also joint spousal preparation for the many presentations made by these six individuals, as when John Hughes described the influence of kindergarten spirit on higher education in 1896 or when Ada Hughes gave a 1905 address about the value of physical education.

The stated positions, the efforts to incorporate women into the association, and the many contributions made by these husbands and wives to the advancement of Froebelian philosophy and to the NEA Kindergarten Department contradict the accusation of male dominance. We must look further to uncover the reasons for this new group.

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18 Letter in Hailmann Collection, UCLA, dated April 1879.
19 NEA, 1891, p 98.
20 NEA, 1892, pp 545-6.

Endorsement of Public School Kindergartens

The idea of public school kindergartens was not certainly not new to the NEA membership in 1891. It had been a topic of discussion since the association's first years. Froebel himself had expressed doubts about whether they could maintain the spirit of the system,[21] and those educators who introduced the kindergarten into the United States held similar concerns. Henry Barnard, who became the first U.S. Commissioner of Education in 1867, had been enthusiastic since 1854 about what he termed "by far the most original, attractive, and philosophical form of infant development the world has yet seen." Even he realized that school boards had a tendency to appoint unqualified relatives to other teaching positions, and he wanted to avoid that in the kindergartens.[22] Elizabeth Peabody, who originally opposed public support, quoted Barnard at the 1878 meeting of the American Froebel Union as favoring charity kindergartens because "Education forgets to be a philanthropy and becomes a business and its progress in the primary stage was most disastrous."[23] By the mid-1800s, however, she advocated that kindergarten teachers be trained in public normal schools, and that kindergartens be opened as soon as the teachers could be prepared. Wesley, in his history of the NEA, summarized the transition from private kindergartens to public education: "For decades the revolutionary nature of the kindergarten was dimly perceived. In its early years it was tolerated because it concerned itself with a period which most adults regarded as barren and troublesome. Even the early kindergarteners were strict constructionists and emphasized the separateness and difference of their institutions, while the primary teachers who had consecrated themselves to schedules of phonics and number combinations were frankly skeptical of the value of a year or two of play and fervently hoped that the experience would not incapacitate the child for the serious discipline of mental training that lay ahead of him."[24]

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21 See A. H. Heinmann (1893). *Froebel Letters*. Boston: Lee and Shepard. 52-57.
22 Barnard (1890. *Kindergarten*. p. 1. See References.
23 Quoted in R. Baylor (1965). *Elizabeth Peabody: Kindergarten Pioneer*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. p 118.
24 E. B. Wesley, (1957). *NEA*. p. 256 See References.

Public school kindergartens had been a topic at NEA conventions since the first one 1872, when William Hailmann's paper had been on "Adaption of Froebel's System of Education to American Education." The following year, John Dickenson of Massachusetts. spoke on "Froebel's System of Education – What Is It – How It Can Be Introduced Into the Public Schools." An appointed committee of seven, which included Hailmann, Dickenson, and Krause, studied this potential and gave a positive report in 1874. Other speakers endorsed the idea over the next two decades, but at this 1891 meeting the push for public school kindergartens must have seemed overwhelming. At the Kindergarten Department's opening session, Miss Cropsey of Indiana spoke on "The Organic Connection between the Kindergarten and the Primary School" and emphasized the importance of public school support. Louise Pollock, a Berlin-trained Froebelian who had her own school in Washington, began her talk with a joke about climbing the steps of the Boston Statehouse in 1863 "to urge the Hon. Mr. Philbrick the advantage of having kindergartens given to the children of the public schools. 'My dear madam,' he said, 'we have hardly space in our school-rooms to accomodate the children; we could not think of giving them gardens.'" Ada Hughes, incoming president of the Kindergarten Department, was even more specific in her paper on "Kindergarten Methods in Intellectual Training" when she asserted that "There are economists who claim that it is an unwarrantable expense to add it it to the public school system, because they do not see its value as an intellectual training; and to these we must appeal with the results of our work, showing it to be a foundation broad and true for all growth, such as no other system of training or learning can lay claim to."

In searching for reasons the IKU was established, I wondered whether its organizers were reacting to the commercial displays featured at the 1891 conference. William Hailmann had made his famous argument against "Schoolishness in the Kindergarten" and the excessive use of manufactured materials the previous year. Kindergarten advocates must have been discouraged to note the stress upon brand names in Toronto and they probably viewed these as elements of public school kindergartens. In addition to the use of Bradley's colored paper, there was white painting paper, ruled into half inch squares, from the Nicholas

Company of Rochester. An exhibit by the Prang Course of Study advertised a system of geometric clay models for younger children and with folded paper patterns for those who were older. The commercial displays were also memorable because the mimeograph machine, invented by Thomas Edison in 1876, was demonstrated as the latest technology for the improvement of education. We all know where THAT led in the years to come, as ditto worksheets became synonymous with kindergarten-primary education. After 1891, there were no kindergarten exhibit areas - but the commercial exhibits continued to increase in size and variety.

Beyond the obvious commercial aspects of the 1891 meeting, however, there are indications that the women who established the IKU were primarily responding to concerns that the public schools would not provide adequate staffing for appropriate learning experiences and also would not maintain the traditional kindergarten curriculum and philosophy.

The choice of the U.S. Commissioner of Education, William Torrey Harris, as the Kindergarten Department's 1891 "keynote" speaker must have also aroused suspicions among the membership. This Hegelian philosopher with a Yale M.A., a Missouri State University doctorate, and several honorary degrees from European universities was one of the most prestigious individuals attending the 1891 NEA meeting. As St. Louis Superintendent of Schools from 1867 to 1889, Harris had instituted America's first public school kindergarten in 1873. He had been president of the NEA in 1875, but "He used to control the decisions of the National Education Association year after year. When he said 'thumbs up on any decision, it was adopted. When he said 'thumbs down' that idea was dead as a dodo."[25]

Harris believed that children of the slums were "the moral weaklings of society" whose route to success was through education. They were only weakened by charity - including the philanthropic kindergartens.[26] His presentation to the Kindergarten Department on

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25 K. F. Leidecker (1946). *Yankee Teacher*. NY: Philosophical Library. p 522.

26 Harris expressed this in several places, including "The Kindergarten as a Preparation for the Highest Civilization" in *Atlantic Educational Journal*, Vol. VI, 1903. pp 35-36. See also M. Curti (1935). Ch. IX – "William T. Harris, the Conservator" in *The Social Ideas of American Educators*. NY: Scribner's.

"Kindergarten and the Primary School" seemed to be an indication of national support for their adoption by public schools. Harris repeated his belief that this was an economical system to prepare children for the rigors and discipline of later education. Many of those who listened to him in 1891 had heard his talks before, including one for the American Froebel Union in 1879 when he had ridiculed kindergarten by saying that "If what they claim for it were met with actual results, we should certainly realize the fairest ideals of a perfected type of humanity at once." Instead, he viewed the "genius of Froebel" as providing "a system of discipline and instruction which is wonderfully adapted to this stage of a child's growth – a time when he is good for nothing else." He saw kindergarten as preparation for industrial work and as a means of instilling polite habits, punctuality, silence and self-control. And he recognized that "this is far from satisfactory to the enthusiastic disciples of Froebel ... who see in the kindergarten the means for the moral regeneration of the human race."[27]

Members of the Kindergarten Department knew about the Harris plan to have double session kindergartens staffed with one director and one assistant for sixty pupils, supplemented by volunteers who paid for the privilege by attending weekly adult classes. Even more significantly, many of those attending the Toronto meeting were friends of Susan Blow and knew that her arduous work of opening the St. Louis kindergartens and directing them for eleven years had been entirely without payment. They also knew that when Harris resigned his position as superintendent of the St. Louis public schools to take the position in Washington, the kindergartens were placed directly under the supervision of the elementary school administration. This led Susan Blow to also resign, since she anticipated that it would not be possible to continue with the "play" curriculum of Froebel. In a paper prepared for the U.S. Exhibit at the 1900 Paris Exposition, she detailed the problems of public school kindergartens. She expressed the need for a "specially trained qualified supervisor" and her concern for the non-Froebelian aspects of many

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27 W. T. Harris, "Kindergarten in the Public School System" reprinted in Barnard (1890), *Kindergarten and Child Culture*. pp 617-642.

programs.[28] It should be noted that Susan Blow entertained an IKU organizing committee at her Cazenovia home in 1894. From 1903 to 1913 she chaired the "conservative" sub-committee on their Committee of Nineteen while the membership tried to define its philosophical position. She was a popular speaker at the IKU meetings and also served on the IKU advisory board until her death in 1916.[29]

Probably the most significant item of business at the 1891 NEA convention was the resolution proposed by Dr. A. S. Draper, State Superintendent of Schools for New York state. As adopted by vote of the general membership, it recommended that kindergarten should be part of all school systems and that its educational principles should be extended to all the work of elementary education. Many of those attending the NEA conference represented private kindergartens or those sponsored and supported and charitable agencies or religious denominations. After Draper's resolution was passed, there appears to have been justified concern about their future. Sponsors could foresee the closing of the private and philanthropic kindergartens as children were sent to those in the public schools – and they could predict what would happen then.

Conclusion

According to Sarah Stewart, reporting in 1892 as vice-president of the newly organized IKU,[30] the new group proposed to provide a forum for the dissemination of kindergarten information and to promote the acceptance of kindergartens as preparation for later education. Her report on the organizational meeting implies that this was impossible with the multiple activities and crowded schedule of the NEA annual conventions.[31] Why, then, did they continue to meet with the NEA until the 1895 conference in Denver? It is somewhat ironic that this organization evolved from a committee charged with the job of planning an exhibit for the 1993 Columbian Exposition in Chicago – which gave a "tremendous impetus" to public school kindergartens. While the

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[28] Reprinted as "Kindergarten Education" in K. M. Paciorek and J. H. Munro (2nd edition, 1999). *Sources – Notable Selections in Early Childhood Education*. Guilford, CN: Dushkin/McGraw Hill. pp 179-184.

[29] A helpful biography of Susan Blow, with details of her relationship to the IKU, is in A. Snyder (1972). *Dauntless Women*. pp 58-85. See References.

[30] In 1930, the IKU became the Association for Childhood Education, now the ACEI.

[31] S. Stewart, "Aims" in *Report of the International Kindergarten Union*, 1892. pp. 6-7.

significance of the NEA resolution can be questioned, only eight states had sanctioned kindergartens in the public schools in 1890, but they were funded in 23 states by 1900.[32]

A clear trend was apparent to the kindergarten supporters as they realized that when these public schools provided rooms, supervisors, and financial support for the kindergartens they only hired teachers who had graduated from normal schools or other college-level training programs. A majority on the IKU organizing committee lacked formal education in teaching. A complete analysis of this point is beyond the scope of the present paper, but Sarah B. Cooper was its first president. A wealthy widow from San Francisco, she was an example of the enthusiastic laypersons who had developed and sustained the philanthropic kindergartens during the 1880s – a period characterized by "Sisterhood and Sentimentality." Sarah Stewart, the First Vice-President, was supervisor of a teacher training school in Milwaukee which was dependent upon philanthropic funding.[33]

If the organizing committee of the IKU had expected to maintain the traditional Froebelian system of kindergarten education, they must have been disappointed. The decade of the 1890s was one of tremendous changes. A major depression began in 1893, effectively cutting off support for many charity programs. The Spanish-American War disrupted all aspects of life, altered the political scene, and began the redistribution of wealth that led to great fortunes - and muckraking journalism. The emergence of progressive education, child study as a field of psychology, public health agencies, home economics and social work as professions, and many other concepts emerged.during the prosperity of the early 1900s. Because of complicated interacting factors beyond the scope of this paper, the Froebelian "Gifts" and "Occupations" were almost abandoned by the early 1900s, even though many of the kindergarten ideas had been integrated into American public schools.

We must also recognize that the original leaders of the Kindergarten Department began to drop out of the picture in the 1890s. William Hailmann was appointed Superintendent of Indian Schools in

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[32] N. Vandewalker (1908). *Kindergarten*. p 194. See References.

[33] D. W. Hewes (1995). "Sisterhood and Sentimentality - America's Earliest Preschool Centers" in *Childcare Information Exchange*, no. 106 and ERIC EJ 516 697.

1893, just at the beginning of the depression. Although this appointment provided him with an opportunity to expand Froebelian education on a national scale, annual reports and correspondence show the limits imposed by public opinion, political pressures, and inadequate funds. Once again, Eudora became involved. Her kindergarten program on the Indian reservations was remarkably like today's Head Start, with training programs, community aides and parent involvement. When Grover Cleveland – the Democrat who had appointed and supported Hailmann – lost the presidential election to William McKinley in 1896, it led to termination of Hailmann's appointment as Superintendent of the Indian Schools.[34] Eudora belonged to the IKU for three years, but did not take an active role. She developed what appears to have been a severe depression in 1896 and was homebound until her death in 1905. William became superintendent of schools in Dayton, moved to the Boston area to write textbooks, and then chaired the Department of Psychology and History at Chicago Normal School from 1904 to 1914 before moving to Pasadena to join the Broadoaks Training School - one of the remaining outposts of Froebelians. He remained active there until his death after a short illness in 1920.[35]

It is noteworthy that Ada continued to be identified as Toronto's kindergarten supervisor during this entire period. In his 1898 book, Froebel's Educational Laws for All Teachers, James Hughes acknowledged the "inspiration received" from Maria Kraus-Boelte and the Hailmanns, and also Ada's "constant suggestiveness." In it, he repeatedly emphasized that girls, as well as boys, should be educated through creative self-activity and should become independent women who could contribute to solving the problems of society. Ada Hughes, 1906-1908 president of the IKU, became one of the so-called Progressives on the its Committee of Nineteen, which was charged with the task of clarifying and codifying the philosophy and goals of kindergarten work.

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[34] D. W. Hewes. "Those first good years of Indian education" in *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, Vol. 5:3, 1981 and ERIC EJ 394 079.

[35] While in Pasadena, William Hailmann apparently helped develop America's first cooperative nursery school in 1915. See D. W. Hewes (1998). *"It's the Camaraderie" – A History of Parent Cooperative Preschools*. Davis, CA: Univ. of California, Center for Cooperatives. p. 38-39.

Maria Kraus-Boelté continued to operate the New York Seminary for Kindergartners after her husband died in 1896. By the time it closed in 1913, the training program had graduated at least twelve hundred kindergarten teachers. Maria Kraus-Boelté was a frequent speaker at NEA Kindergarten Department sessions and was its president from 1898 to 1900. She also became active in the IKU, where she was a member of the Liberal-Conservative sub-group in the Committee of Nineteen. She died of cancer in 1918, one week before her eighty-second birthday and just before the publication of the *Who's Who in America* in which she was listed. An adopted daughter, Emma, carried on the family tradition by entering the new multi-disciplinary field of child development.[36]

We might speculate upon what could have happened if those kindergarten advocates who pulled back from the NEA Kindergarten structure had devoted their efforts to strengthening it. Perhaps kindergartens would have been sponsored by the public schools for the original age range from toddlers to six, but with the higher standards that we are still struggling to attain. Close involvement of parents was important in the original kindergartens and might have been extended to all levels of the public schools. Perhaps our professional status in early childhood education would have been higher if our field had been perceived as an element of the overall educational establishment, rather than being tagged with the "baby sitter" connotation.

Another way of looking at this situation is to recognize that these women who started the IKU had learned to be pretty savvy operators in a culture that limited their options. By extending their socially approved feminine roles to include their communities through the kindergartens, they could help children and families help themselves. While it is true that many programs ceased to exist during the difficult decade of the 1890s, we still have child care centers and preschools and Head Start classes across the nation that have direct ties to these early kindergartens.

The legacy left by these kindergarten pioneers and of the controversy that was brought out in 1891 has resulted in this NAEYC conference here in Toronto. The prime example is Patty Smith Hill, only

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36 J. Kraus.(1877). "The kindergarten: Its use and abuse in America." NEA. pp 186-206.

twenty-two years old when William Hailmann encouraged her to provide a non-traditional exhibit at the 1890 convention. Her analysis of the public school controversy during the 1890s was summarized in 1919: "The kindergarten was something of a misfit in the public schools at this period and for many years afterwards. ... The proportion of children to teacher was heavily increased, to the detriment of child and teacher. In order to reduce costs per capita and to reach large numbers of children, the double session was introduced, with different groups of children for each session. This plan of necessity eliminated all welfare work formerly done by the kindergartner in the afternoons ....Adjustment to public-school conditions came slowly."[37]

Patty Smith Hill soon emerged as a leader within the NEA Kindergarten Department and the International Kindergarten Union (where she was the 1908-1910 president). Her direct relationship to our attendance here today lies in her establishment of the Committee on Nursery Schools in 1926, the precursor of the National Association for Nursery Education (NANE) which became today's NAEYC. Hill's friendship with the NEA couples having egalitarian marriages provided her with assurance of her own role and helped her function in a male dominated world. However, she also recognized that men should be included on the original Committee on Nursery Schools to ensure its credibility. It was not just a coincidence that George Stoddard was NANE president-elect at the 1933 Toronto conference, where he noted that women had "practically monopolized" early education and that "the new association" was "a case of men's liberation."[38]

Perhaps the fitting final statement is an undated motto of Patty Smith Hill's from the ACEI archives. It seems to reflect the philosophy she learned from organizational struggles dealt with over the years:

"Don't put all your strength into fighting your opponents and ideas of the past. Put all your faith and effort into the present and future."

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[37] P. S. Hill, "Kindergarten" reprint from American Educator Encyclopedia (1919). Washington, D.C.: ACEI.

[38] D. W. Hewes (1976). "Patty Smith Hill: Pioneer for Young Children" in Young Children. Vol 31, no. 4. pp 297-306 and ERIC EJ 141 431.

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